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*AUTHOR:*

NORTHHOUSE, W. S.

*TITLE:*

CHURCH RATES PROVED TO BE ILLEGAL

*PLACE:*

[LONDON]

*DATE:*

[1837]

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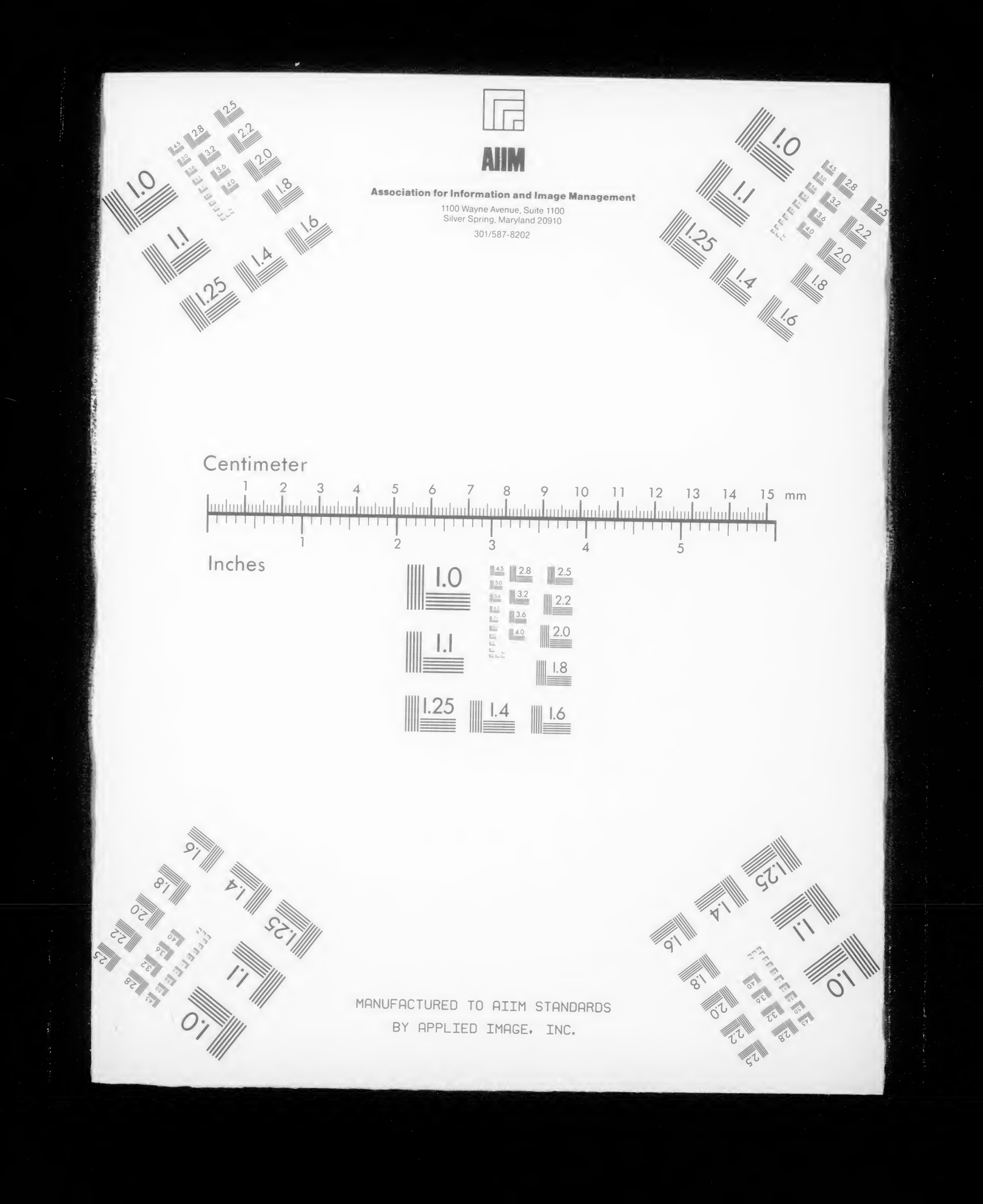
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# CHURCH RATES No. 8.

PROVED TO BE

# ILLEGAL, UNCONSTITUTIONAL,

AND

# ANTI-PROTESTANT;

BY

W. S. NORTHHOUSE,

PARLIAMENTARY AGENT,

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF A SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE

HORNS' TAVERN, KENNINGTON,

TO THE ELECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF LAMBETH,

AND CONTAINING REPORTS OF THE LEGAL DECISIONS

AND QUOTATIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF

BISHOP LATIMER, Dr. BARROW, Dr. BURN, JOHN MILTON,

AND OTHERS.

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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TO

JOHN WILKS, ESQ. M. P.

THIS LITTLE PAMPHLET IS DEDICATED,

FROM THE GRATITUDE WHICH THE AUTHOR, AS A DISSENTER,

FEELS FOR HIS UNCEASING EFFORTS IN THE GREAT CAUSE OF

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY;

WHICH EFFORTS, THOUGH OFTEN QUIET AND UNOBTRUSIVE,

HAVE ALWAYS BEEN VALUABLE AND SERVICEABLE,

AND ARE NOW LIKELY TO BE TRIUMPHANTLY SUCCESSFUL.

PARLIAMENT STREET,
April 3rd, 1837.

# ABOLITION

OF

# CHURCH RATES.

---

A public meeting of the electors and inhabitant householders of Lambeth, was held at the Horns' Tavern, Kennington, on Monday, the 27th of March, to consider the propriety of petitioning Parliament in favour of the plan proposed by his Majesty's Government, for the abolition of Church Rates. The attendance was very numerous. The Chairman, SAMUEL PALMER, Esq., having eloquently introduced the subject, letters being read from Mr. Hawes, Dr. Lushington, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Pattison, Mr. Duncombe, and Mr. Grote, and a gentleman having requested that all the resolutions might be read in order that the Meeting might have the whole fully before them;

MR. NORTHHOUSE, being called upon by the chairman addressed the Meeting as follows:

GENTLEMEN, I have the honor of being deputed to bring the first Resolution before you. It is one to which I trust that the gentleman who has requested that the whole of the Resolutions be read will not object: it is one to which every man may assent, be he Whig, Tory, or Radical;—it is one with which politics ought to have no connexion; and I earnestly hope that in its consideration we shall strictly confine ourselves to its substantive merits, and be prepared rather than lose sight of truth, justice and Christian principles, to fling "party to the winds, and faction to the whirlwinds." *(cheers)*. The following is the Resolution.

"That this meeting view with unfeigned regret, the grievances and contentions which have constantly occurred on the subject of Church Rates, often bringing the ministers of the gospel into unseemly collision with their parishioners, and always destroying that good fellowship which ought to prevail amongst the members of a Christian community,"

*(cheers)*. Now were there anything in this Resolution, or in the object of this Meeting that could have the least tendency to impair the efficiency of the Church of England, or to lessen the spread of social and religious education among the people, I should reject it

with disdain—I would be no consenting party to such a proposal. I consider that England owes its greatness and its glory mainly to the moral excellence of its people; that the advancement of religious principles, and the consequent soundness of the population are in comparison with politics,

"As Ossa to a wart."

hence I would implore you to suffer nothing to divert or distract your minds from the real question at issue; which is, whether it is more for the interests of Christianity, and better for the community at large, that Church Rates should be abolished, or that they should not, *(hear, hear,)* and whether in fact that the present system does or does not produce consequences the most inimical to religious feeling—war where there ought to be peace—discord where there ought to be harmony, and hatred where there ought to be Christian charity and brotherly love? *(cheers)*

Gentlemen, a great number of petitions have been presented to both houses of Parliament, praying that Church Rates should not be abolished, and really it might be imagined from the clamour of many of the Church Rate payers on the subject, that the old charge against the people of "an ignorant impatience of taxation," should be changed to an ignorant impatience of relief: *(laughter)* but do I regret the number of these petitions? Far from it—I rejoice that such a feeling exists—I rejoice in whatever portion of those petitions it may be that evinces a sincere apprehension on behalf of the Church;—the motives of the petitioners are deserving of the highest honor and the warmest sympathy;—they love the faith of their fathers, and desire that their children may never want the means which they possess, of being educated in the paths of religion and piety—God forbid that of such a feeling they should ever be deprived, or that the policy of any government should ever interfere with its growth and its developement! I accuse not *it*, but I accuse those who would take advantage of such virtuous simplicity—of those who for their own ambitious and corrupt objects have guaged the extent of unsophisticated piety in the rural districts, and made nice calculations of the votes they might gain by alarming the fears of wayfaring but church-loving country people. Oh! I do accuse those who expect by such tricks to regain place and power. I do accuse that blasphemous presumption which would make the "kingdom of God," a mere stepping stone to mundane preferments! —I do acccuse that reckless selfishness which could risk, for such paltry objects, the continuance in Christian faith, of those who when they discover how they have been cheated, may confound religion itself with its false-hearted professors. *(hear hear)* That there is no such pretended veneration for Church Rates among those fomenters of the rural districts, I have a pretty strong proof in my hand; I hold here a letter addressed to one of the greatest champions of the present Church system, from the Churchwardens of a Metropolitan parish, the parish of St. John, and St. Margaret, Westminster, beseeching him to pay his own arrears of Church Rates which have



been due for more than four years, *(loud cries of hear, hear)*. The Right Honourable gentleman to whom this letter is addressed is not so poor that he is unable to afford them, but on the contrary of princely wealth; he is not sordid, but on the contrary of princely liberality. I will read the letter.

[Mr. Northhouse then read the letter, which was dated 10th December, 1836, and asked for the payment of £16. 0s. 10d., being arrears for Church Rates in the years 1831 and 1832. It stated, that there might be a doubt as to the legality of the rate, but £800. having been advanced on the security of the rate, and the executors of the party who had advanced the money being anxious for its repayment, the churchwardens hoped that their request would be complied with, especially from those "who were such true friends to the Church, and who had never yet paid any Church Rates at all," as was the case with the inhabitants of Whitehall, Richmond-terrace, &c. This letter was signed by Henry Lucas, James Bower, John Johnson, and James Lys Seager, churchwardens. *(Loud cries of Name, name)*.]

I ought not to give the name—the letter is not answered to this hour, but from the important claims upon the Right Honourable Gentleman's time, it may not yet be convenient to answer it; and I only adduce it to shew that there is no such personal feeling of the necessity of Church Rates among the great provers of the cry in their favour as they wish to enkindle in others. *(no, no, name, name.)* There might be another reason: the Right Honourable Gentleman has alluded in Parliament, to the "privilege and pleasure" of contributing to the Church Rates; and, perhaps, he might not be averse to indulge the people with the privilege and pleasure of paying his portion as well as their own. *(Laughter succeeded, by cries of name name.)* Gentlemen, the argument is just as good without the name as with it; *(name, name)*, I hope, as the Right Honourable Gentleman may pay this demand you will not compel me to divulge his name. *(here the uproar became tremendous, and Mr. N. was not permitted to proceed by the shouts for the name.)* Well, if I must give you the name, this is the copy of a letter, addressed among others, to the Right Honourable, *Sir Robert Peel*, Baronet. *(Loud cries of Oh! Oh! and long continued laughter.)*

Gentlemen,—having disposed of this letter, I will now proceed to the consideration of compulsory Church Rates, in a legal, constitutional, protestant, and religious point of view; and as it is a subject of very great importance, I must solicit your attention to details of rather a dry character, as I shall first begin with the Law. During the recent debates in Parliament, it has been said, that where parishes refused to pay Church Rates they could be compelled to do so by a *mandamus*. In the second vol. of Modern Reports, the following cases occur:—the first is *Rogers v. Davenant*.

*In prohibition* the question was, whether, if a Church be out of *repair*, or so much out of order, that it must be rebuilt, the bishop of the diocese may direct a commission to empower commissioners to *tax and rate* every parishioner for the rebuilding thereof? The court unanimously agreed, that such

commissions are *against Law*, and therefore granted a prohibition to the spiritual court to *stop a suit* there commenced against some of the parishioners of Whitechapel, for not paying the tax according to their proportions."

Again, in the Court of Exchequer, page 222—in the case of "*St. Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey Church, Southwark*," wherein was decided:—"That the Bishop or his Chancellor, cannot set a rate upon a parish,—but it must be done by the parishioners themselves." So *North*, Chief Justice, said it had been lately ruled in the Common Pleas."

Again, there is a case in the 5th Vol. of the Term Reports, (the King against the Churchwardens, of St. Peter's, Thetford,) which is reported as follows:—

"*Bower*, (Counsel) moved for a *mandamus* to the defendants, (the Churchwardens) *to make a Rate* for the repairs of the Church, of this Parish. He admitted that, in general, the Rate should be made by the Churchwardens and *Inhabitants*, at a Vestry, but said that the former alone might make a Church Rate, if the latter refused, (1, Ventris, 367) and he stated that the Inhabitants had refused in this case; but the Court said, *we cannot interpose by granting a mandamus*, this being a subject purely of Ecclesiastical jurisdiction."

Also in "the King against Wilson and others."—Dowling and Ryland's reports, vol. 5, p. 602, it is stated

"On a former day a Rule was obtained, calling on the Churchwardens, of —, in the County of Cambridge, to shew cause why a *mandamus* should not issue to them, commanding them *to make a Rate*, for the repairs of a donative Church, in that Parish. *Scarlet* shewed cause, and objected, preliminarily that a *mandamus* would not lie to the Churchwardens, *to make a Rate*. All that they could be *required* to do was *to call a meeting* of the Parishioners, for the purpose of *considering the propriety* of making a Rate. The Churchwardens *had not power to make a Rate* without the sanction of the Vestry. He cited *the King against the Bishop of Chester*, (1, T. R. 396) *and the King against St. Margaret's* (4, *Maule and Selwyn*, 250). Denman, (Counsel on the other side) admitted th force of the objection. *The Court said, you cannot call upon the Churchwardens to make a Rate.* You can only call upon them to hold a Vestry meeting for that purpose.—Rule discharged.

Now, Gentlemen, all these cases agree, in the principle that the Common Law Judges have not power to compel a Rate, but that all the power to make a Rate, is vested in the Parishioners themselves, and that their refusal is subjected alone to the exploded anathemas of the Spiritual Court. (*hear, hear.*) This, however, ought to be no matter of surprise; the great principles of our constitution, run through and intersect the whole law, and the maxim everywhere prevails that no man can be taxed, save by his own consent, and though perhaps some of us may differ upon the point whether actual representation should be co-extensive with taxation, we shall all agree that taxation, without either actual or virtual representation, is tyranny, (*cheers*). On this principle I take my second position, that compulsory Church Rates are not only illegal, but that they are unconstitutional. (*hear, hear.*)

Gentlemen, I now approach a most important branch of this subject, the *justice* or *injustice* of the Rates;—and here there are certain principles, which only require stating, to be immediately and unanimously acknowledged. The first I take to be this,—the golden maxim as it is most properly called, "Do ye unto others as ye would



that others should do unto you." Apply it—ask the Churchman how he would like to have summonses and warrants issued—to have his goods seized, and sold—to pay for the support of a Dissenter's Chapel? (*loud cries of hear, hear.*) But it is contended that the Church is the National Religion, and being the Religion of the majority of the people, ought to be supported by all. Now waiving the application of this argument to Ireland, (*hear, hear,*) and suspending my opinion, as to the fact of the majority, (*hear, hear,*) let us enquire whether the establishment have not sufficient property, and is not in justice bound to apply that property to the maintenance and repair of its own Churches. The great Ecclesiastical authority, Dr. BURN in his chapter on Appropriations, says

"The benevolence of a Diocese was, at first, entirely at the Bishop's receipt and disposal: but, that there might appear to be a *just application* of it, a rule was obtained for dividing the fund into *four* parts; *one to the fabric and ornaments of the church;* another to the officiating priest; a third to the poor and necessitous travellers; and a fourth reserved to the more immediate service of the Bishop and his College. But when Sees began to be endowed in the lands, and other firm possessions, then the Bishops did tacitly recede from their quarter part, and were afterwards by Canons forbidden to demand it, if they could live without it. So that the division was now only into *three* parts; and every priest was the receiver and distributor, as the Bishop had been before,—*standing obliged to expend one part on the raising, supporting, and adorning his church* and manse.—another part upon entertaining strangers and relieving the poor,—and to have a third reserved for his own immediate occasions. *Yet still the whole product of tithes and offerings was the bank of each parish church, and the minister was the sole trustee and* dispenser of them, according to those stated rules of piety and charity.* "

This is the law. The Church took the wealth of its Catholic predecessors, upon the same trusts on which that wealth was then held, and one of those trusts clearly was, the repair and maintenance of the buildings and fabric. If it will no longer perform the trusts, it is bound to give up the property, and justice demands that such should be the case. (*cheers*). But there are other reasons of a still more important character bearing upon this portion of the case. The immortal Milton, says

"Forced consecrations out of another man's estate, are no better than forced vows—hateful to God, '*who loves a cheerful giver*,' but much more hateful, wrung out of men's purses, to maintain a disapproved ministry against their conscience; however unholy, infamous, and dishonourable to his ministers, and the free Gospel, maintained in such unworthy manner as by violence and extortion. If he give it, as to his teacher, what justice or equity compels him to pay for learning that Religion, which leaves freely to his choice, whether he will learn it or no, whether of his teacher or another, and especially to pay for what he never learned or approves not; whereby, besides the wound of his conscience, he becomes the less able to recompense his true teacher? †"

Here is a powerful argument which I now, call upon the advocates of those "forced consecrations" to answer. Are they prepared to provide for the chapels of the Dissenter to the extent that they

* BURN, on Ecclesiastical Law.

† Essay on the likeliest means to remove hirelings out of the Church.

incapacitate him from providing for them himself? If not, where is their justice? Where is their practical observance of "Do ye unto others as ye would that others should do unto you?" (*loud cheers*).

Gentlemen, let us now look at another feature of this case, and enquire how far Church Rates are consistent with *Christianity*. (*hear*) There are certain principles and precepts which all acknowledge and which bear most powerfully upon this part of the subject. The great founder of our faith laid an express injunction upon his disciples,—(the successors of whom the Established Clergy claim to be) —he directed them to go forth and "preach the Gospel to every creature;" to "take neither purse nor scrip," but in every house say "peace." Do they, in the forcible exaction of Church Rates, obey this injunction? Do they, not take both purse and scrip (*A voice, "yes, and Bibles too,"*) and in every house say "war?" (*great cheering*).

Again, our Saviour proposes a test of the sincerity of his followers; —he says, "by this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if *ye have love one to another*." Where is the love that is enkindled or developed by summonses and warrants of distress? Milton in his time denounced such anti-Christian conduct, and compared it to that of the wicked sons of Eli, who fell victims to the righteous vengeance of that God whose temples they had desecrated, and whose services they had prostituted: he says,

"Their violent and irreligious exactions;—their seizing of pots and pans from the poor; from some the very beds; their suing and imprisoning, worse than when the Canon Law was in force; worse than when those wicked sons of Eli were Priests, whose manner was thus to seize their pretended priestly due by force;—1 *Sam.* 12, *&c.*, '*Whereby men abhorred the offering of the Lord.*' And it may be feared that many will as much abhor the Gospel, if such violence as this be suffered in her ministers, and in that which they also pretend to be the offering of the Lord. For those sons of Belial within some limits, made seizure of what they knew was their own by an undoubted Law; but these, from what there is no sanctuary, seize out of men's grounds, out of men's houses, their other goods of double, sometimes of treble value, for that which did not covetousness and rapine blind them, they know to be not their own by the Gospel they preach *."

What a spectacle we had but yesterday in this great metropolis —here in the capital city of Christianized Europe, to witness in one parish alone the issuing of 1200 warrants of distress for Church Rates! (*Loud cries of hear, hear, and great groaning.*) Is this Christianity? (*No! No!*) But let us not confine ourselves to the testimonies of our friends—the evidence of those who "have a reason for the hope that is in them"—let us go into the camp of the infidel and behold there the rightful use that is made of these unholy weapons of professing Christians;—let us mark how the Titans who are warring against our Olympus, shoot back those weapons upon Christianity itself. Observe the language of their great leader;

"Is it, say'st thou, religion that's the parent
Of all this rapine, virulence, and rage?

* Milton, on the likeliest means to remove Hirelings from the Church.



No! true religion is ever mild, propitious, and humane;
Plays not the tyrant; plants no faith in blood;
Nor bears destruction on her chariot wheels;
But stoops to succour, polish, and redress,
And builds her grandeur on the public good."

Let not those who profess the benign, the mild, and the beautiful principles of Christianity be taught their own religion by the arch infidel Voltaire. (*Loud cheers.*)

Let us now go from Christianity in general to Protestantism in particular, and see how far the very basis of Protestantism bears upon the question at issue. And here we are very favorably circumstanced; a meeting is advertised to be held in this room next Friday, of no doubt *equally* pious and patriotic individuals, to support Protestant principles, and to check, the "alarming growth and encouragement of Popery." (*Laughter.*) That meeting is to be under the auspices and presidency of the Honourable and gallant member for the County, and being so honoured (*laughter*) and having such truly Protestant objects, it may be as well that those pious and patriotic people, should be reminded of the foundation on which Protestantism itself is based, and then perhaps we may look for their co-operation in getting rid of the Popish leaven that still cleaves to our Protestant establishment, in the shape of compulsory Church Rates. (*laughter and cheers.*) Be it known, therefore, to Captain Alsager, and his friends, that some two centuries ago, the Roman Catholic Religion being the dominant Church throughout nearly the whole of Europe, and, there being some few Dissenters who could not conscientiously belong to it, undertook by three modes to compel all men to lend it their support—first,—on pain of forfeiture of goods; secondly, on pain of forfeiture of liberty; and, thirdly, on pain of forfeiture of life;—now, in the present times there is another dominant Church, which does not attempt to force all men into its communion, but without coveting their souls, extorts their purses, and take from many their liberty, and from all, their money. (*hear, hear.*) What, I ask, is the difference between the two Churches save in degree? It is true the present dominant Church does not go so far as the former one; the secular arm does not extend to the stake, but to the step next to the stake it does extend; and in principle, both Churches are one and indivisible. (*cheers.*) Let me tell Captain Alsager, that it was to combat this very principle that the first protest was issued: that the sacred right of private judgement in matters of faith, was the very key-stone of Protestantism;—that for this "the holy army of martyrs" which the Church honours in its liturgy, but forget in its law, ascended up into heaven through the racks, tortures, and flames of the earth; (*immense cheering*) that for this the Latimers and Ridleys, fed those fires in Smithfield, which illumined the christian world, and at which the torches of Protestantism, that soon after blazed into day, were lit. These indeed were the pillars of the Christian temple—

"Flinging their shadows from on high,
Like dials which the wizard Time,
Had raised, to count his ages by."

(*great cheering.*) That Protestantism was founded upon this great principle, we have authority upon authority; but, I will again refer you to Milton, who says

"It is the general consent of all sound protestant writers, that neither traditions, Councils, nor Canons of the visible church, much less edicts of any magistrate or civil session, but the scripture only, can be the final judge or rule in matters of religion, and that only in the conscience of every christian to himself. Which protestation, made by the first public reformers of our religion against the Imperial edict of Charles the Fifth, imposing church traditions without scripture, gave first beginning to the name of Protestant; and with that name hath ever been received this doctrine, which prefers the scripture before the church, and acknowledges none but the scripture, sole interpreter of itself to the conscience. But if any man shall pretend that the scripture judges to his conscience for other men, he makes himself greater, not only than the church, but also than the scriptures, than the consciences of other men—a presumption too high for any mortal. Chiefly for this cause do all true Protestants account the Pope, Antichrist, for that he assumes to himself this infallibility over both the conscience and the scripture—'*sitting in the temple of God.*' as it were opposite to God, '*and exalting himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped.*—2 *Thess.*, *ii.*, 4.*"

Here then, in their departure from this great principle, is the "alarming growth of Popery," at which those pious gentlemen are so much, and so justly alarmed. (*Laughter and cheers.*) I recommend them to consider the following quotation;—

"The Papist exacts our belief as to the Church due above scripture; and by the Church, which is the whole people of God, understands the Pope, the general Councils, prelatical only, and the surnamed fathers; but the forcing Protestant, though he deny such belief to any Church whatsoever, yet takes it to himself and his teachers, of far less authority then to be called the Church, and above Scripture believed; which renders his practice both contrary to his belief, and far worse than that belief, which he condemns in the Papist. By all which, well considered, the more he professes to be a true Protestant, the more he hath to answer for his persecuting than a Papist.†"

Let us mark too what one of the greatest dignitaries and luminaries of the Church of England says, a man acknowledged to this hour, to have been one of the soundest and most orthodox of her divines—the distinguished Dr. Barrow; let us mark the test by which he tries a Christian Church. After shewing what such a Church ought to be "simple without wealth and pomp," "gentle without force and violence," persuasive without imperious awe," forbidden to domineer," "furnished with no arms save the divine panoply," teaching to reprove but not being allowed to *compel.* He goes on—

"But *supposing* the Church was designed to be one in this manner of political regiment, *it must be quite another thing*;—nearly resembling a *worldly* state, yea, in effect, soon *resolving itself into such an one*; supposing, as is now pretended, that its management is committed to an ecclesiastical monarch; it must become a worldly kingdom; for such a polity could not be upheld without applying *the same means and engines*, without practising the same methods and arts, whereby secular governments are maintained. Its *majesty* must be supported by conspicuous *pomp and phantastry.* Its *dignity and power*, must be supported by *wealth*, which it must corrode, and accumulate by *large incomes*, by *exaction of tributes*

* Treatise of Civil power in Ecclesiastical cases.

† Milton's Treatise of civil power in Ecclesiastical causes.



*and taxes.* It must exert *authority*, in exacting laws *for keeping its state in order, and securing its interests*, backed with rewards and pains; especially considering *its title being so dark and grounded on no clear warrant, many always will contest it.* It must apply *constraint and force*, for procuring obedience and correcting transgression. It must have guards to preserve its safety and authority. It must be engaged in wars, to defend itself and make good its interests. It must use *subtlety and artifice*, for promoting its interests, and countermining the policies of adversaries. *It must erect judicatories*, and must decide causes, *with formality of legal process*; whence *tedious suits, crafty pleadings, quirks of law and pettifoggeries*; fees and charges, extortion and *barratry will necessarily creep in.* All which things do much *disagree from the original constitution and design* of the Christian Church, which *is averse from pomp*, doth *reject domination*, doth *not require craft, wealth, or force to maintain it*; but did interest at first, and may do so still without any such means*."

This is what the great Dr. Barrow considered in his day, and this is but a prophetic vision of the Church in our day, and one which, that great leader of Martyrs, Latimer, saw in his. Listen to the following sermon addressed by him in the spirit of prophecy to the then clergy:—

"Take heed and beware of *covetousness!* take heed, and beware of *covetousness!* take heed and beware of *covetousness!* And what, if I say nothing, these three or four hours. but these few words? Great complaint there was against it,—much crying out,—and much *preaching*,—but, *little amendment.* Covetousness is the root of all evil. Therefore, *strike at that root?* Aye, out with your axes, *ye preachers*, and *strike at that root!* Stand not ticking and toying at the *branches*, for *new* branches may spring forth again; but strike at the *root. Fear not these great men*, these men of *power*,—these *oppressors* of the needy, —fear them not, but STRIKE AT THE ROOT!†"

(*great cheering.*) Aye, indeed, "Strike at that Root." It is the Upas of the Garden of our Eden.—(*hear, hear.*) It is now gravely argued, and that too by great names in the Church, that without wealth to incite, prizes, as they are termed, to provoke emulation—Sees and preferments to tempt young aspirants for Holy Orders, to feel and to declare that they are moved by the Spirit; the Church would have no efficient ministry, and would cease to be preached by "lips wet from the Castalian fount." The argument is met by Milton in a burst of indignant eloquence. In a reply to some such disputants as are now clothed in lawn sleeves, he says—

"As for your young scholars, that petition for Bishoprics and Deaneries to encourage them in their studies, and that many gentlemen, else, will not put their sons to learning; away with such young mercenary striplings, and their simoniacal fathers. God has no need of such;—they have no part or lot in his vineyard. They may as well sue for nunneries, that they may have some convenient stowage for their withered daughters, because they cannot give them portions answerable to the pride and vanity they have bred them in. This is the root of all our mischief; that which they alledge for the encouragement of theri studies, should be cut away forthwith, as the very bait of pride and ambition,—the very garbage that draws together all the fowls of prey and ravin in the land, to come and gorge upon the church. How can it be but ever unhappy to the Church of England, while she shall think to entice men to the pure service of God, by the

* Barrow's *Discourse concerning the Divine unity of the Church.*

† Gilpin's Life of Latimer.

same means that were used to tempt our Saviour to the service of the Devil, by laying before him—honour and preferment? *"

Gentlemen, I wish not to press the Church too hard, or to probe her wounds too painfully; yet I may ask, why is she not more beloved and respected than she is? There is little in her liturgies that is not lovely and of good repute—her thirty-nine articles are scriptural and sufficiently latitudinarian to let in nearly all consciences, from the Calvinist to the Armenian; how then, are there such hosts of Dissenters, who refuse to belong to her communion? Is it not because she is self-degraded by these attempts to compel men to support her whether they like it or not? Is it not because her "Right Reverend Fathers in God," instead of being imitators of the meek and lowly Jesus, are rapacious in their graspings, and rampant in their politics. (*Hear hear.*) It is an old and true Aphorism, "that Religion brought forth Wealth, and the Daughter devoured the Mother." (*Cheers and laughter.*)

I am the last individual in the world to institute an enquiry as to the means by which those Right Reverend Prelates attained the power which they now level against the liberties of the Dissenters. I am the last being in the world disposed to ask whether some of them were indebted for their vast Sees, and magnificent revenues more to a king's conscience, or a king's concubine, (*immense cheering.*) But if they *will* force themselves before the people as enemies alike of the Government and the Gospel—if they *will* flatter themselves that they are pure streams from an impure fountain, (*great laughter*) and *will*—

> "Play such fantastic tricks before high Heaven,
> As make the angels weep"—

they must take the consequences of their conduct in the institution of such enquiries—and be content with the halloo of faction, instead of the respect and veneration of the wise and the good of the whole Christian world; (*cheers*) well indeed has Milton described them—

> "Although the Prelates, in the time of Popery, were sometimes friendly enough to *Magna Charta*, it was because they stood upon their own bottom, without their main dependance on the royal nod: but now being well acquainted that the protestant religion, if she will reform herself rightly by the scriptures, must undress them of all their gilded vanities, and reduce them as they were at first to the lowly and equal order of presbyters; they know it concerns them nearly to study the times more than the text, and to lift up their eyes to the hills of the Court, from whence only comes their help;—but if their pride grow weary of this crouching and observance, as ere long it would, and that yet their minds climb still to a higher ascent of worldly honour, this only refuge can remain to them, that they must of necessity contrive to bring themselves and us back again to the Pope's supremacy; and this we see they have, by fair degrees of late been doing.†"

* Milton's Animadversions upon a Remonstrant's defence, &c.

† Milton's Reasons of Church Government urged against Prelaty.



What is the chief cause of the dissent which exists? It is not in doctrine, for nine-tenths of the different sects may find their own doctrines in the Articles of the Church. It is not in the liturgy, for, with the exception of the atrocious forgery rarely read, known by the name of the Athanasian creed, nearly all Dissenters concur in admiring its beauty and piety, and acknowledge that they have nothing equal to it. It must be therefore not because of the *principles*, but because of the *practices* of the Church that dissent has covered the land. Why do we dissent? Because we believe that Christ's "kingdom is not of this world;" because we acknowledge no supremacy save that of our own divine master, and no code save that of the Eternal word — because we have not yet learned to solve the problem of a Christian church being able to serve at the same time both God and mammon—because we—

> "Disdain to rest our Heaven aspiring wings,
> Beneath their native quarry."

(*great cheering.*)

Gentlemen, the Dissenters are of opinion, and they have right to be protected in that opinion, that they ought not to be compelled to support another Church to which they conscientiously dissent, in addition to the support of their own Chapels. The liberal Churchman is of opinion, that he ought not to be degraded by being indebted for his place of worship to the forced contributions of his christian brother, the Dissenter. Who have we in opposition to those? Not the honest bigot—he is deluded, but he is just;—not the working Minister of the Church, he starves in the midst of its wealth, and will for ever starve under the present system;—not the Common Law, for its greatest authorities have declared that they have no power to interfere;—not the British Constitution, for its crowning jewel, is, that no man shall be taxed without his own consent;—not the Protestant faith, for it was founded on exactly the opposite principle;—not the Christian Religion, for it is a Temple, not built by human hands, and seeking no forced consecrations; but Gentlemen, by the mean and the selfish—the ambitious prelate, and the crouching priest—the calculating trader in politics, and smooth-tongued dealer in devotion; men who, to win their tortuous way to the offices they have lost, would make Heaven a stepping-stone, and God a go-between. (*immense cheering*).

Gentlemen, we have one consolation—the system cannot last, (*hear, hear*). It was always difficult, it is now impracticable. The light that the late debates have shed upon the people, will enable them to rid themselves of the tyranny that has so long oppressed them. After the Attorney General's speech, stating the law, and a knowledge of the cases which I have quoted, and many others which I might have quoted, it is impossible for the system to drag much longer its "slow length along;" but how awful is the contemplation of the means by which it may be destroyed. What rancour!—what

fury!—what desecration of the Temples of the living God! Wicked are the men who will not permit an enlightened Government, and a beneficent Monarch, to provide other means, without injustice to any, for contributing what has been hitherto forced from all! (*cheers*).

Gentlemen, Dissenter though I am, most glad should I be to behold the Church regaining her primitive purity and glory, and denuding herself of the harlequinade garb in which avarice and ambition have enshrouded her. (*cheers*). Once more I hope to see the gentle dove take the place, before its kindred altar, of the voracious vulture that now too frequently haunts it. I hope to see the place of Magæra and her sister furies with their serpents hissing for wealth and power, supplied by the Christian graces of Faith, Hope, and Charity, the greatest of whom is Charity. (*Loud applause*). Then indeed will the Church be worthy of the name of its divine Founder, and deserve the high title which it assumes, of being the greatest Protestant Church of Europe; then indeed will Dissent be crippled, and the Church reclaim her lost children; and then indeed, may those who love her exclaim, that she is IMMORTAL, IMMUTABLE, UNIVERSAL!—that

> "The stars may fade away, the sun himself
> Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years,
> But she shall flourish in immortal youth,
> Unhurt, amid the war of elements,
> The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds!"

—(*Immense cheering*).

Mr. Henderson seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

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